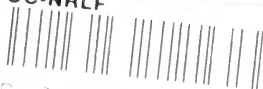


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POEMS

P O E M S

BY

MICHAEL STRANGE

AUTHOR OF "MISCELLANEOUS POEMS"



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EXCLAMATIONS

I
FIFTH AVENUE — TWILIGHT

THROUGHOUT the city streets,
These flitting white-knobbed silhouettes
Rushing from all sides
In different directions
Beneath an oblique quilt
Of dawn-slanting stars,
Aspiring lamps
Amidst the glamorous baffling traffic
Of all endeavouring chaos —
They walking their impetuous, languid, garrulous
Or curiously stiff walks —
Or passing me swiftly by
Among the luminous shredded subtlety
Of motor shadows.
O these slanting city lights!
How virulently they excite me!
Exposing to me as they do — and suddenly
The passer-by's thought crescent-wise,
Engraving his private expression
Across my receptive heart

Until I, detecting him unawares
Project him exactly into myself,
Then exposing completely
What he shall some day recall of his heart
Upon reading me.
O the tip-tap of these ever-becoming steps
Clinking their infinite coin
Against counters irrevocable,
Shod in ashes, in roses, they passing me by
Palpitate forever towards that which they are not,
Eternal irradiations of Cosmic Pulse.

II
ON A FERRY PASSING NEW YORK CITY
IN JANUARY

T O-NIGHT there will be snow.
On my left beholding
Those rearing contours

Vastly built,
Tallest exclamations of greed itself
— Becoming ever more ghostly —
As around their base
And languidly curling like incense,
Smoke, from furnaces nourishing
To the lust of trades,
Beholding these builded reflections
Waving their night-blue columns
Between ice floes,
Beholding their roofs
Conicaled! templéd! pyramided!
Becoming lost amongst the skies!
Sorrowing obscurity,
Beholding gulls, dawn-coloured,
Shrieking from ice block to ice block

Over gashes of deadening black water;
Aye, listening to the silence of the wind,
Oppressed within the limned hollows of the air,
I know there to be among the heavens
Torrents of white dust,
A whisper from chaos awaiting
To descend,
Plunging us all
In pale glittering confusion —
For to-night there will be snow.

III
FIFTH AVENUE AND FORTY-SECOND
STREET

DROVES, droves,
Unceasingly passing me,
Drawing back instinctively
Or going forward
In bunches, always in bunches.
Ah, how it saddens me of men
That one does not dash forward through risk
Into annihilation perhaps,
Or into gaining the curb superbly ahead
Of the rest.

IV
STREET IMPRESSIONS

A MAN walking past
Dazed by some purpose horrible for him. . . .
Girls, vermillioned, spider-limbed,
Linked arm in arm,
Avoiding with gestures careless, unconscious,
The dashboards of crashing conveyance. . . .
Children gamin-eyed
Peering up from their slanted caps,
Impudent, weary. . . .
Smart-collared young men,
Narrow-chested, snickering,
City-ruined. . . .
Soldiers stern, swift-moving,
Threading the crowds in their yellow liveries
Of vengeance retributive. . . .
And now a woman
Coming up from the subway weeping,
All too bitterly lost from herself
To remember behaviour. . . .

Everywhere war-posters, flags,
A crazy quilt of colour
Printed or waving;
And over all outlines sharp, uneven,
Wounding the snow-vague sky. . . .
And beneath all, mud oozing up
Through layers of pavement,
Clinging to heels fantastic, foolish,
To ragged little boots,
To wheels and trucks. . . .
And throughout all the ricocheting hammer
Of steel against rock
Erecting, disfiguring,
Destroying, uplifting —
So does the city life
Streak swiftly by
The windows of my car.

V

BOAT whistles from the river
 And a vision of waters heaving sullenly
 Beneath those reflections wavering
 Of solitary lights. . . .
 Boat whistles from the river
 And a vision of drowsing humanity attempting to rouse
 itself
 Along foam-wet night-slurred decks
 To commence then, groping a way upon business small
 As shall be its silhouette
 Against to-morrow's sunrise. . . .
 Ah, what weariness in this vision
 Of waters swelling sullenly
 Beneath those reflections wavering
 Of solitary lights. . . .
 Ah, what pathos in this vision
 Of humanity labouring
 Out of so much —
 Into so much more!

VI
TO MADEMOISELLE LEGINSKA

S WIFT powerful hands insistently naked,
Galloping out upon the keys
Your barebacked personality,
Redolent you of encounters
With a wind nigh fatal,
With nights near unending.
O, far less did Beethoven's Fourth Concerto divert me
Than the cataract motions of your hands,
Swift, powerful, insistently naked!

VII
TO I. K.

YOU are vague as the reflection of a woman's
dress
At twilight

Above a polished floor.

You, who are effusive of romantic melancholy

As the shadow of some moonlit rose-tree

Blowing across those garden paths

Already touched by autumn.

VIII
TO YOUTH

YOU, loving life because unsuftering thus far
Her truth,
And adoring passion
Who never yet have endured her sacrifice.
You, rhapsodising about death even,
Who have not felt her monotonous pallor
Eclipsing the radiance of your living strength.
Ah, well may you love everything,
Whose dust is still so lacquered
With delusive ecstasy.

IX

G OING my way wise, still enchanted,
Nor stopping to censure misfortunes,
Lest their glance

Arrest me into silence;

Going my way looking broadly about me,

And thoughtfully inhaling the air,

The air tanged, aromatic, of moist roots

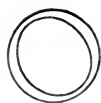
Gentle, mysterious, from mist —

So I, going my way, am infused

With the active impressions of a mind peaceful —

Am steeped within tolerance wistful! expectant!

X



LISTEN you to whom I meaning much
Am nevertheless distant for you,
There is one who is all to me
Yet to whom I am nothing.
So forever do we bannister the stairway
From now unto hence,
Proffering each his flowers toward some figure
With averted eyes.

XI

MY dreams! O so familiar to me,
But their mysterious sister Life
She, she, provoking me forever,
Coquetting with me to fall beneath her wheels
That I, attaining through rashness
Her bitter-sweet attention,
Should catch within my shattered arms
Her eloquent corsage,
The flowers of which she knows
Should they touch my blood,
Shall ascend from me again
As a fountain of stars,
So illumining forever
The flying one's path.
My dreams! O so familiar to me,
But their mysterious sister Life
She, she, provoking me forever!

XII

FROM chasms of infinite speculation,
I detecting the dawn twisting herself out
From monstrous night-shadows,
As a grey-veiled dancer undulating,
Appearing from between columns of onyx,
And she flashing back the lids of all beholders,
To infuse their eyes
With that flashing sadness of unquenchable desire —
Just so, the dawn flooding with pallors
Of insatiate wakefulness
Those melancholy childish brows of men
Unappeasable, for their own survival,
While I, compassed within the invisible,
I, passionately desiring to challenge, torture
Significance
Into abandoning her cool deep mouth
For my inexorable kiss
As from the chasms of infinite speculation,
I perceiving the dawn to be twisting herself out
Of a titantic night.

XIII

I DESIRE starlight
Over long stretches of water —
A serpentine mirror
Pricked with golden drops. . . .
I desire dawn
Filtering down in slabs in tails of mist
Through those odorous garlanded limbs
Of spring orchards. . . .
And I desire to push back my chair forever
From this stained and wrinkled table,
Over which I for so long
Coquetting with futility,
And for so long yearning towards her various profiles
(With that profane credulity
Manufactured from weakness). . . .
For now I am weary, uncontrollably weary
Of all that is alien to my inner wish,
So now I must pass and await my soul
Among infinite depths of rejoicing silence.

XIV

NEVER has my soul been wooed sufficiently
To intrigue its fidelity,
For instinctively my soul
Resenting this demoniac-flung noose of passion
With its swift reining in,
So intuitively does my soul
Become malicious towards those affections detaining it
From seeking further
Love! Truth!
Eternally suggesting, eternally deferring.

XV



NE Spring I catching from you

Indifference to life.

One warm evening beneath a blood-rocketing
sunset

I perceiving those mauve grey tides

Breeding mists indissoluble

— Beneath your whimsically pomponed words —

Then I appalled by a vision of you

— Stretched bleakly out with lashes flaring rigidly
awake —

Dead, dead at the bottom of your soul!

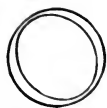
Then I knowing my love might not rekindle

Such crystal apathies,

Caught from you one Spring evening

The indifference to life.

XVI



EASTER LILY,

You are the portrait of a saint

Achieved in wax,

And I desiring

Your attenuate pallid heavy-headed fragrance

To be framed,

Among those tortuous golden convolutions

Of my beloved's hair!

XVII
TOASTS

I DRINKING to the galloping obsessions of youth,
And to those whose dreams swerve suddenly
Into perverse corners;
I drinking to my unrequited love
Aching me with death pallors of mortal thirst —
And I drinking also
To that love forever surrounding me,
Useless to my drought
As the tides are to the drowned;
I drinking to the harlot's first true love,
To the wife's first free love,
And to a child's primal memories
Of Spring;
Since I drinking to that azalea blush of Virtue,
And to Sin's suavely inconstant flushing,
And to all life
In her eternally modish bonnet,
And to death
In his helmet of tears.

XVIII

A S a broken shutter
Is attached scarcely to an empty house,
Through the calm of mid-day
Hanging disjointed;
But rocking creakily throughout the night,
Churning in the wind
Towards its own destruction, —
Even so my soul
Is attached but faintly to realities,
Glued under suppressions during the day,
But at night rocking in a tempest of loneliness,
Hysterically pushing, tearing against
Some immense fabric of isolation,
Then pausing, regarding, with tragic terror
The averted face of approaching doom!

XIX

FROM MATURITY TO YOUTH

NO longer can my soul be completely inspired
Since across the frieze of memory
Too many pageants have gathered, passed by.
Nor may I within the profounder zenith
Of my broader wisdoms,
Fly as once
Upon those hooded white wings
Of ignorant dreams.
For who could celebrate
Adventure's opulent flushing
With its knife grazing among keen dances!
With its irradiant joys
Sinking down beneath rainbow oblivions!
Or with its wistfully flung glances
Catching eternity in bondage?
Ah! who could celebrate these things
After sensing the shrieking stab of poisoned wounds,
After being stifled

In the dishevelled glare of satiations,
Or after being left
Among those brooding desolate shadows
Of a belovèd's departure?
Experience gathers for us a knowledge
More than half the disenchantment of pain.
But Youth! Youth! shy, impudent,
Cooling your heels at heavenly gates,
Inserting your curiosities among the reefs of hell
And safe as a sleep-walker;
What may *you* not tell us
Naïvely as a child plucked from a brothel table,
Or enticed from its play amidst the flowers of shrines,
O Youth! Youth! what eloquent rich intimacies
Should pass from you,
Who speak in parables you have not tried
To us
Who have suffered what we may not tell.

XX

I LOITERING where breezes turning into wind
Have dragged me by the hair,
Beneath a sun burning me to cinders.
I loitering where music shaking the sinews of my soul
Into golden rain,
Has tossed me to drown in a vast pathos
Of half remembered tears.
Indeed I loitering
With promise, persuasion, gallantry, purpose,
And through cycles of time,
And yet not finding wherein to place
The eternity of my trust
Save within the growing kindliness
Of my own eye.

XXI
YOUR GRIEF

MY soul rocks in anguish
Over your grieving shoulders.
Your shoulders bent forever,
And from leaning once
Above your dead child.

My sight sways in tears
At seeing your poor hands,
So empty, relaxed always
And from once touching
Their pallid loss.

My voice flounders senselessly
When conversing against your detachment,
Since all your mortal attention
Was extinguished once
Upon a cry — incredulous!

O I, knowing well
That, placed upon each layer
Of your grim consciousness,
Lies the small coffin
Of your fatal calamity.

So my soul rocks in anguish
Over your grieving shoulders,
Your shoulders bent forever,
And from leaning once
Above your dead child.

XXII



FOLLOW up the enthusiasms
Of your youth
With applying activities,
Instead of glaciating their beams
With vain celebrating announcement.
Becoming reckless over continual labour
Rather than rash over incessant emotional
search,
Smiling slowly, sustainedly,
Towards pain, anxiety,
And throughout the effort relentless excruciating
Of your uttermost possibility,
Rather than jumping after glimpses of sensations
For conclusion;
Singing loudly of all inspiring you
And softly of yourself inspired —
Tearing away all callous sophisticate
Of experience, education,
In order that exactly exposing yourself,
From your responses,

You should discover your extent;
Doing these things you — surely widening gates
Since only beneath drawn blood,
Are hidden those crystal springs
For to-morrow's thirst.

XXIII

THERE is only one base — The Life Source —
Worth wreathing! recalling!
Forever with my songs,
The Life Source, from whose clandestine depth
Continually jets the Pedestal of Life,
Upon whose balance then reach into standing
The ever unveiling entities of man,
With their touching slope
Of sheer dejection,
With their flung-back gestures
Towards salvation,
Or with their languor's slanting
Over decadence.
Ah, during all their sculptural strainings,
These knotted groups emit such beauty
Of fertile posture! tragic impotence!
That my nostrils expand
Towards their tests with joy,
That there should be such life —
Alive in the world.

XXIV

I AM young! young!
And you all hate me for it.
Entering your confines
I convulse them,
Being all too lusty
For your drowsy conversations.
I snapping up the shades
Across your blear-blind eyes,
I singeing your brains
With the star-lit air,
And you, garret-dwellers
Dreading me like fire,
Perceiving in my force
Your extinguishing cap.
Yet how sad! how sad!
You cannot like me,
Knowing not that I smell
Of the moon! the sea!
Nor that my hair
Is woven of to-morrow's flowers,
And my feet —

In the stirrup of sunrise itself!
No! you cannot see
My dancing futurity,
For I am young, young,
And you all hate me for it.

XXV

I WOULD have life joy —
 Nothing but joy!
 I teaching my own disciplines
 To appetites ignorant,
 I teaching the manner of my abandons
 To just hungers,
 And I supporting my stammering heart
 Up through the sea
 Of undertows oppressional,
 Of drugged pedantries,
 Up towards the foam-flecked
 Of the truth.
 I thrusting off the gag
 Of absurd education,
 And refilling my lungs
 With the dangerous air
 Of ideas that blast ere ever building.
 I being glad for the child new-born,
 A fresh rose
 For the ever-fading garden;
 And I also, being glad for the dead

Who icily drowse ere burning again
In that spiral smoke of to-morrow's flame.
Indeed I seeking the joy of life
Which skyrockets ever
Most beneath weeping,
And I calling for a stronger mirth
Upon the very tip-top of my laughter;
Since I would have life joy
And nothing but joy.

XXVI

I AFFIRM

Life replies cleanly
To all who caress her
With abrupt muscles,
Twinkling beneath the feet
Of those who can repass her iniquities
Dancing.

I affirm
Life gives brass
To alm-seekers;
Silver
To the observers
Of shackled peace;
And gold
Only to those who have forever lost
Their taste for it.

I affirm
Life is made exhausting
Only by the obscene,
And obscenity rising

From those false rates
We place upon conduct —
All in order to smartly title
Our evasions.

I affirm
In everything we see
Moving the ingredients
Of all else;
That the penetrating fragrance
Of this heliotrope to-morrow
Is the haunting sadness
Of some being's eyes;
That this dust before me
To-morrow is a star,
And the star a glow-worm
Toiling through dust.

XXVII
TO A BEAUTIFUL EGOIST

YOU are a statue
Carven from the bewildering beauties of the
world,

A graven image
Fashioned from the flaring of dreams.
All vast flowers blooming,
Wilting against your marble breasts,
Have smeared a strange fragrance
Across your skin,
And all great tears
Gilding your eyes
With their unabsorbed moisture,
Have left in your gaze
A peculiar brightness,
So that your expressions pinch me,
With recollections haunting
Of vanishing joys,
Of uncomforted sadness,
And of the tragic impotence

Of flavourless being.

Ah, you sprain my heart

Half catching your evasions —

You, who recall everything —

And are so purely — nothing!

XXVIII

TO FREDERICK NIETZSCHE — PROPHET

YOU come toward us in the tatters of a mending dress;
With your glance stolen from a drowning eagle,

You, who are of the storm always
Before there is ever a wind
To partner your furies.
Naturally we meadow-reapers
Chewing in the sun,
Look up curiously at your self-lashing
To continue on digesting our cowslips.
Until we see your hate-creased breath
Turning black the fleeced nimbus of the sky;
Until we observe your furious-fingered mockery
Clutching, bending back our harvest's throat;
Until we discern your fourth dimensional eye
Tearing the sea up out of its bed!
And at no great distance from ourselves —
Ah, then we seek shelter,

Marveling, readjusting, finding through fear
Your metaphorical radiance
To be washing up suddenly upon our surface
Much wisdom of subconscious memory.
Indeed perceiving you at length to have a defiance
Of congruity! comfort! safety!
That has already achieved for us
A beautiful fantastic wedge,
In that perilous awe-studded gateway
Dividing man — from his divinity.

XXIX

I WANT of you not this intellectual passion
Always consciously composing its code
Of liberties! considerations!
Nor this reasonable loftiness,
Treating each circumstance with oratorical gestures
Toward some invisible public.
Nor do I exact this fraternal fairness
In sexual emergency —
Nor even this cerebral impartiality
In passional disaster —
Phew, such attitudes savouring to me
Of affectation masking depleted instinct,
Or of egomania parading as a new charity.
Listen! I want your mouth whispering over my heart
“This complete moment
Is moulding us eternally together!”
I want our limbs, twisted, luminous,
Crushing the physical into spiritual invocation,
Commingling! Ascending!
Nor afterward any slamming down of the lid

Upon emerging spirit.

Since I desire that consummation become a beginning,

A beginning, stammering our souls with tenderness,

Inflating us with moods palpitating —

Disconcerting — mysterious — as dreams —

Moods confessional — adventurous,

Flickering our fancy with spectre forms

Triumphant — transcendant — angelic —

Since I admonish consummation to become a beginning,

And so mortal love, the legitimate mediator

Between God and Man.

XXX

I GAINING in suppleness of vision
 Through renting my way into this freedom,
 Still so unaccountably sad!
 Nor relapsing for even momentary comfort
 Into any bondage whatsoever.
 The applauded sacrifice already named facile
 By some,
 And the majesty of decisions alienating
 Already celebrated by the few.
 So I announcing
 That only beyond our last pain
 When self-inflicted in the cause of joy,
 Shall we perceive the turf of paradise
 Stretching illimitably before —
 In vast panoramics — of pastoral peace.

XXXI



NLY that man discover, devote himself
To the undeniable voice,
Learning from its demands and his own
responses

How much God achievable for him.
For what else governments
Rattling against each other in wars
And rashing into pestilence!
They, always fortified in natural allegiance
With creeds standardized — or religion,
Or the soul's supreme spiritual narcotic;
And, for what else countries leaping
Each upon the other's back,
Poisoning themselves
From successful malice,
Save that some men
(Becoming incensed into seeking antidote
Against such palsied deviation from progress)
Should wrench themselves aside from aiding
These issues in particular,
And so formulate "A general idea."

SONGS

I

ENDYMION, Endymion,
I give to you my fancies
Strung in opals
To bind upon your fantastic throat. . . .
I give to you my hopes
Wrapped in their cool blue wings
To adorn your soaring cap. . . .
I give to you the last thirst
Of my insatiate nerves
And the primal prayer of my passionate tears
To flag! glisten! upon your finger. . . .
Since I, giving you the flash
Of my first impulse irresistible;
And gathering together all those twilight inquiries
Of my attenuate hands;
And all, in order to girdle your bewitching form
With those flaring contrasts,
Attiring you so worthily for my passion,
Endymion! Endymion! . . .

II

WHOM did I go out to meet there —
Running along by the sands
At the very edge of pale fluctuating serpents —
During a blue dawn?
For whom were my clothes fastened with flowers,
And for whom my eyes soaring, diving among amaze-
ments
As birds quivering between shadows and light?
Again for whom my thoughts burning up
Into a smoking flare of spice! and establishing words,
Words that were a fluid necklace of agitating jewels,
If not for you, O my beloved,
Waiting gracious for my coming,
There, a little apart from the sea, you awaiting me
And honey-coloured against the sun —
Exhaled toward me the land-breeze
Of poppy and of clove.

III

YOUR words a breeze
Blowing up from the turquoise heaving
Of oriental seas. . . .

Your words a fairyland of forests
Humming with the music
Of unique birds. . .

Your sense fantastic for reading
As the dew's hieroglyphs
Over night-purple roses. . . .

Yet, what matters your sense
Who possess such soul —
Whose words are tender! deep!
As are those reflections of twilight
In a well of springs.

IV

I N your eyes the purple bloom of moonlight
Through cathedral glass. . . .
Upon your lips a twisted silence
Left from exalted storms. . . .
Imprisoned within your face
The woven glammers of appalling depth. . . .
While among those drifting gestures of your pallid hands
Ah, all the weariness of pangs insatiate!

V

GLANCING sharply upon your beauty
 A curtain seems lifted suddenly
 From before a shrine. . . .

Beholding you, almost transparent —

Subtly wise —

I think of tears

Painting shadows

Along the petals of flowers. . . .

Examining you,

I find you to be luminous, evasive, as moonbeams

Drifting delicately

Through a golden trellis,

Of some ghost-woman's hair. . . .

O looking at you snatches the rhapsody

From each trembling nightingale,

Droughts the cup

Of every fragrant dew-blurred blossom —

And all for the nourishment of this flame

That is spearing us together.

VI

YOU are my love, a confounding spell of curious
witcheries,
A specious chain of bewildering reliefs.

And I knowing of you nothing —
Save you to have dilated my soul
With unresisted anguish,
And pervaded my brain
With a hissing dazzle of fancies pointing deathwards;
Like a shot rocket's curving into the sea!
O you are my love, a trenchant youth voice singing
back to me
The savage sweetness of my own breathless dreaming —
And you are my love, that livid lightning blow
Splintering, possessing those last secret roots
Conserving my pasts, forging my futures —
And I knowing of you nothing, nothing
Save you to have flung over my will — a drought of
desire,
Save you to have crumpled the structure of my heart
Down, down, into a spray of ashes
Burning incessantly.

VII
TO X

IN your eyes the glance
Archangels throw behind them
At a heaven they descend from;
Your eyes stained with dreams, clouded through storm,
Elliptic from depth —
And your features! so furrowed they —
By those oblique tracks
Of peculiar emotional fancies;
Again your lips! your lips reminding me of wings,
Wings strayed pathetically from eyries
Fantastically remote.
Have you thought all
Unsuffering the abrasions of experience?
Or are your thoughts a gaunt phoenix hovering
Above those garbled nightmare bodies —
Of illusions desecrate?
And my questions encumbering the winds;
May some night chant their way
Among those Gothic vistas

Of your high dreams,
Stirring you with visions comradely —
Towards one who could so aptly question you,
Towards one who could touch more sharply than contact —
The qualities of your being.
So one night I leading you into some dream of us
Amorously illuminating, as a sudden trellis of moonlight
Darting over sequestered lovers —
For never have I seen a face so reminiscent as yours
Of clouds rent — before annihilating glory.

VIII

YOUR beauty sweeping into me
As gusts of wind
From a Southern garden,
Awaking my idleness
Like arrows unsheathed from the sun.
Your beauty racking me
With the torturing chill
Of great fever;
And yet calming my tossed effervescing,
As a sail crossing the horizon
Comforts lonely eyes.
For in your beauty is the rind
Of my utmost licentiousness,
The protracted energy
For my consummate attainments,
The stirring pathos
Of my innumerable farewells.
Since your beauty sweeping into me
As gusts of wind
From a Southern garden,
Is clad for me with prophecies —
Out of all memory.

IX

FOR what have you sought my love,
Along those flashing wastes of passion?
Who move so wearily as the dawn's unwilling step
Over-stamped in ruins of unlimited woe.
O what crucifix you, tortured
Into nailing yourself against?
That your arms are become so attenuate
As those stark supplicating limbs of nightmare.
I wonder, have you assaulted life in darkness
And whispering
I need you so! oh let me —
Yet when the spear entering, nailing you
Into frantic submission,
You crying out from the very center nerve
Of such ecstasy, I have fear!
Since you selling then into bondage
What you might surmise only —
And for the witchery of moments.
Since you denying of yourself
More than you could have known
Before self-betrayal.

And all in order to induce
Those scarlet wings of appalling lips
To glisten, close, across your mouth.
Yet when this tease of pleasure
Titillating curious truth-stained exclamations out of you
And their sense languishing mateless unanswered along
the air —
Ah, then you turning to regard
The gracious youth of your sleeping love
Alongside of your waking, ageless, heart.

X

YOUR countenance rising upon the horizon
of my wan thought,
As sunshafts staining into sudden wakefulness,
A sleep-weary brow.
And you, from whose eyes exhaling passions
So far transcending hope or words;
Whose deep lips are etched in ironies
At knowing self inviolate
From either search or finding.
For the wind has loosened among your hair
The breathless fury of her secret tenderness;
The moon has pressed that chameleon moisture
From her wilted tears
Into this mobile pallor illumining your hands;
And life, life broke up the mirror
Reflecting her entire cortège
To ignite this flaring glitter
In your sad still smile.
Ah Love whom I shall not know in love,
Attend my song toward you,

It rising from tear-snarled chasms spirally
A twilight-coloured spray of sound,
And you, permitting it perhaps to pierce one instant
That fleece-paved cloudiness
Of your intrepid loneliness, my love!

XI

DANCE for me to-night,
My soul is sick from the plastic tedium of
days,
Of hours, decorated with officious pleasure —
I am breathless in a snare of interminable sigh!

O how fragile is thy body
Yet rustling with strength,
Across thy body is rippling a tide of motion
Like the surface of the sea before storm!

Dance for me to-night,
I am diseased with processional,
I am stupefied with recurring lack of affinity,
I am bloodless from the leeches of a terrible monotony!

O thy body is illuminating bronze
And straineth against the sapphire ether
Of star-hemmed night,
Blinding! like some amber torch
Is this tempest of colour along thy flesh —

Dance for me to-night,
Let thy gesture be more sharp
Than luminous spears of day-break;
Let the twisted patterns of thy curious dancing
Evoke a poem inadequate for words;
I weary so of phrases!
And am sightless from the glare of alien lights —

O thy pale body contains the fragrance of flowers
Indented by human sleep;
Thine exquisite carved lips are parted, rigid
As the masks of tragic Fate,
For a thought of death
Is stealing along thine open mouth, O Dreamer!

Dance for me now!
See! from my coquetry towards thee are lights bristling
Sparked from amazement at thine incessant beauty
And fountaining their beams
On very purpose to attract, illumine, cohere
Our most divine convergence —

Ah thou hast the violence of wind,
Its insatiable rhythm —
Thy limbs possess that grim-chested power
Inexorably furious of the storm;
Among thy boughs I toss and glitter like a star
Sucked into whirlpools of clouds.

O my beloved, sigh — soon, soon — across me,
As a breeze of myrrh, as a flood of shadows —
Like a departing song.

MOODS

I

THE WIND

In the rippling abandon of streaming hair,
Among unhinging moans of rust-worn bolts,
Upon the shrieking hiss of disrupting foam,
Instinctively the young tear their hats off
Toward my suffusion chill, insistent,
I bending them backward coldly flushing,
Glazing their palates with what they shall crave.
But the old,
The old departing my presence
And weeping into the flames at my sound,
Like the broken-hearted who stumble in silence
Under the might of a lost love's name.
Now at night, and during my song the unhappy
Apprehensively aware of life among shadows,
But the happy drawing more closely their coverlets
Around this mortal illusion of contact.
And children, but children dreaming of witches,
Of witches in night-shirts, knocking, shuffling,
Shuffling, wailing across the roof
With livid staves,

With bone-grey feet,
With dust-choked shrieks!
For I am the wind,
The mountain-hedged valleys
Upon the face of the sea,
The brutal heavy-chested lover of tree-tops,
The flute rhapsodic shrill,
Of Death.

II

I AM UNREST,
The furtive scratching
Of secret itch,
The galloping rear
Against mountains' feet,
The brow-heaving sight
Over chasms at night.
I am the sinister fanfare
For livid explosions,
The mirage shaping
Among films on the moon,
And that rustling presence
Just ahead — of all pace.
For I am unrest,
Those circling instincts
In the cap of the brain,
Those firm ankles dancing
Into outrushing tides,
And that thumb in the navel
Of the whirlpool itself.

III

I AM FATE,
The thrown-back noose;
The lapse into unconsciousness;
The revitalized echo.
I peer from the faces of pools at dusk,
From the up-flung eyes of praying women,
And from the roar and flux of eternal tides.
My direction speaks
In the curiosities of children,
In the impulses of manhood,
In the sympathies of age.
I drive all caravans
To their next resting,
I tune each instrument
For its latest song.
Since I comprise the gait
Of every purpose
I, who am Fate,
The reins upon Time,
The inevitable Way,
The brow of Destiny.

IV

I AM NIGHT,
The violet forgetfulness
Of rocking nerves!
The candid ecstasy
Of subconscious want.
Among my rich shadows
The truth tosses naked,
Approximately upon the edge
Of her bare necessities.
And experience
Reining up precipitant
To her murmur,
Enters sharply
Into her various concealments,
Causing her dreams
To faint into sleep
And her sleep to writhe
Over memorable dreams.
For so it is exactly
In my crescent hemispheres;

Since I am Night,
The spangled forgetfulness
Of rocking nerves,
And the candid ecstasy
Of subconscious want.

V

I AM SOLITUDE,
 The master of thought,
 The mood of sorrow,
 The whistler for dreams.
 I am in the fixed look
 Of sad eyes,
 And in the questioning smile
 The soul gives strangers.
 I live in the phrase
 That is never answered,
 In the ultimate Why
 Of the cloistered heart.
 I call my élèves
 At the Autumn's moonrise
 And during the winter's
 Snow-mad nights.
 And I sing to them
 Of the loves of angels,
 And of the dying words
 Of passing gods.
 And my voice can impel

Their pains at living
Through white accord
To a phase of peace.
For I am solitude!
The master of thought,
The mood of sorrow,
The whistler for dreams.

VI

HOW swiftly from one desolate moment
I perceiving the widest rifts of destitution —
Rushing out through them to be immediately
beyond

All railings enclosing ambition, domesticity,

Or the securities of faith.

Too much wind

Passing near me during the night,

Or my song

Echoing back sadly

Along a wilderness of autumnal hills,

And like a streak of sunset

Narrowing, engulfed into the night, into the storm,

Am I, toward Hope.

VII

IN the voice of my soul a grave tremor —
Like the sighing of a sea beneath seas,
Like the insomnial tossing of the sky
Beneath her cloud sheets,
And like the murmur of great forests
Withering over night. . . .
Like all these things the sadness, the strength
Trembling in the voice of my soul to-night,
My soul knowing me to yearn
Towards fulfillments inadequate with life,
My soul knowing my feet
To be stifled in the dust of paths,
My soul knowing I may breathe
Only above my head. . . .
And where are those boundaries conserving my extent?
And where are those trees sheltering
To my endeavors?
And where is the sun to ripen
Those clustering fruits of my divinations? . . .
For there is a grave tremor in the voice of my soul —

And it is like the mortal sighing of a sea beneath seas,
Or the fatal writhing of the sky
Beneath her cloud sheets,
And again, it is like the withering of great forests
Over night.

VIII
MELANCHOLY

HERE is fog on the sea
And the passing masts throw a dim shadow
On the grey water.

There is fog on the sea
And the crows perch upon the sounding bells
By the dim water.

There is fog on the sea
And the brown weeds sway like dead women's hair
Afloat on the water.

Like the brown hair of dead women
Afloat on the water
Bending slowly in the thrall of the tides.

So the roots of my soul
Floating among depressions negative,
So the blooms of my will
Swinging dead in a bondage of sighs.

For there is fog on the sea
And the crows sing loudly upon the sounding bells
By the dim water.

IX

AROUND my soul curling
The tear flame of endless yearning,
Across my lips trailing
Those clanging songs of the conquered,
And my hands — O my hands lying open
And most wistfully,
Afraid they to close —
Upon the loss
Of their necessity.

X

IT is night, and I am passing down from the mountains
Towards those melancholy levels
Where I find no kin.

For to-night upon the mountains
The wind gave me tender kisses,
The pines lurched against me with caress,
And the sky, the sky told me scarlet azure stories
Of that which had been done,
Undone beneath her.
For to-night I, shooting arrows with passion
For the virginity of love,
I, running with youth beneath those showers
Of his ephemeral promise,
I, gilding my tongue
With talk among gods!
I — leapt away from myself
Existing only as soul.
Alas, alas, that I should pass, descend,
From this mood anointed,
From these cousinly mountains,
Towards those melancholy levels —
Where I find no kin.

XI

TO-DAY a voice beneath the noisy lake,
Its echo singing —
I am weary, weary of the wind

Blowing forever over me,
O that the wind might sink
Into the distance of my depth —
Disturbing its terrible tranquillity!

To-day a voice in the sky,
Its echo crying —
I am weary, weary of the clouds
Floating forever beneath me,
O that the clouds might rise
Up into this supreme ether
Of my aloneness!

To-day a voice in my soul,
Its echo singing, crying,
Would that I might mate! mate!
With the form of beauty,
With the nerve of color,
With the rest of blindness.

XII

CONTRASTS



UTSIDE there is a summer wind,
The trees bow, shimmer into one another's
arms;

The inland sea folds its endeavoring lips upon the shore
To withdraw gently.

And all flowers expanding robustly —
Among the droning interference of bees,
Between the darting rhythm of innumerable birds —
Exhale into the air that fragrance
Inseparable from health.

Yet inside is the winter storm,
The air split with ice-flecked tears
And brushed with the stark shadow of reeling trees,
And congested with the hail
Of memories so tragic!
That all still experiencing life
As it sways obliquely, pelted sorely,
Longs to be at length — beneath oblivion.

XIII

FOR I too
Should love to linger late
Over the fire,
Listening to the rain upon the roof
And peering through my soul
For "The Word."

Yet I
Have found my solitude
Among the rasp of phases,
Have taken stir for my heart
From the tavern's indecent pace;
Have searched for my word,
My strangely consequent word
Throughout the glaring roar
Of appalling vacuity.

I who had so longed
To linger late
Over the fire,
Listening to the rain upon the roof
While peering through my soul
For "The" word.

XIV

WHAT is it you are saying to-night,
O pulse of my mysterious aspiration?
Through the wind your voice permeating,
Seething into the crevices of my soul,
And tracing great omens
Across the floor of my imagination.
Until I, aching to hold the untenable,
To see above! beneath!
All surface of vision.
Until I, longing to unveil with words more furious
Than language affords
Some beautiful wisdoms
From their tissue of light.
O wind, tell me!
Shall I loosen my words,
Into the storm
Of your various singing?
That we, racing together
With galloping breath,
Should bite into the veins
Of all who hear us

A fathomless desire
For our abysmal lips!
Shall we ride together
Upon your chill thunder?
Polishing the noses
Of all we pass
With sharp sensations
From our frigid fragrance!
Tell me, shall we go?
But I feel our start
Up over the slanting floor
Of the world —
So awake — listen —
From under your bedclothes,
You modestly shamefaced
Idolaters of shame,
For to-night I ride the wind
And singing
To the furthest recess of your womb-clamped souls.
I blowing open your eyes
And pointing to your hands
That you may erect with them more
Than you found at the start,

I advising your song set
Higher than its key,
And that you learn balance from stars
To tease Space for her secrets.
That you dare personally
To be anonymous towards praise,
That you suffer love less
For its raptural promise
Than for the honour of bearing
Its scar upon your soul.
That you throw away
All emaciating faiths
With their sterile whips
For sickly limbs,
And bruising yourself instead
With peak-climbing falls.
Laughing down, then with joy
At the sun on forests,
The rain over droughts,
The dimples of children,
The gait of explorers,
The hungry at meat.
And then still smiling

To greet your sleep,
Your sleep so arriving
When you could no longer have stayed awake
And you passing in it happily
Through momentary submergence,
And you rising from it again
Beneath other suns.

XV
GRIMACE

I WEARY of love
With its lusting jealous pride —
Mildewing into faithless acceptance of degrading
pleasure,
And hence into those distracting scenes —
During which the heart, attempting to stammer up
Some poison inflaming it,
Is suppressed, flung back abruptly
Into a pit of appetite —
O the portentous indignity of such solutions!

I weary of those people
Continually inviting you against a stone wall;
Since just when you fancy yourself
Upon the brink of their reality,
Invariably they switch on footlights,
Unable to further resist becoming their own audience;
Yea, even motioning you to a seat beside them —
Ah, the nonsense! the pathos! of all human relationships!

Yet I do not weary of this adolescent nude-appearing
birch forest
Waving its wine-stained foliage
Toward a floating mass of tumbled clouds,
Clouds rending suddenly in places;
And in order that dazzle should pour crescendo
Out upon the blue ether,
And the earth be slashed in sunlight.

XVI

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA



ETERNALLY reverberating dissonant sea

Leaning well out over you

I detect the glint of fish-flights

Just beneath your surface.

And further down I perceive

Monstrous speckled rays,

Glistening upon horned-treed petrifications.

And these, holding among their mammoth limbs

Titan-clotted coiling masses

Ever approaching, receding from one another

At some point.

And near these palaces, stalactite, Gothic,

Upon one of their rearing steeples poised

Our greatest ship, a frosted weathercock —

And near these bones! saline corrugated,

Looking like a snarl of waxen tapers,

They, borne down through the layers of tides

And turning into effervescing iris foam —

Become part of the haunting mist of the sea.

And fathomless!

As in the depth of a star,
As in the base of our souls,
Function forever separating, enlarging
Into types ascending into Finite
That infinitely yearns.

XVII
FALLING ASLEEP

T O-NIGHT a hand stroking my heart,
Tender its gentleness as the feathers of a
young bird,
And with peaceful force
It seeming to vine me apart
In fresh security,
To tent me away beneath lilies
From the scarlet clutching
Of demoniac arms.
It is the memory of your beloved embrace;
Braided across my double-harrowed flesh
Like flower bands,
Like flower ropes scenting, sustaining me
Towards a nostalgia for impassioned dreams;
For now throughout my being hum those darkening
hints
Of recessional music,
And they, linking to a chain of iridescent sound —
Arch, form a pathway through which I vaguely following

Become at last aware that hardly before me
Are moving Sleep's poppy-sandaled heels,
That there, gliding just ahead of me,
The wistful silhouette of Oblivion himself;
Ah now, and gaining already upon him
I feel the caressing slur of twilight,
And a star's breathing
Through my languid hair.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

EMOTIONS

I

AMONG the wind-tossed moon shadows of
cedar trees,
Upon the sable turnings of perilous Titanic
alleys,
I waiting, seeking to enslave with my embraces
The throat belonging to that voice,
That tone so long whispering me.
I waiting to press my singing lips sharply
Against the mouth of a beloved dream;
And while thus attending, most wistfully observing
flowers,
These inclining raptly toward one another
Beneath their silver pavilions of dew.
And again perceiving the grass turning to a maze of
frosted webs
Fringed by the ghostliness of trees —
And at length detecting that happy ejaculatory sigh
of nature
Mating — half asleep —
Then I suddenly shaken out from the warmth of reverie

Into those first frigid breezes rushing before approach-
ing light,
I grow chilled in a sense of bleak alienation
From nature, since to be happy I must be more than
natural —
From human love — knowing how soon I shall forever
vacate
Its capricious pillow, its detaining arms
For the allure of the complete,
In my lust after divinity.

*By night in my bed
I sought him whom my soul loveth,
I sought him
But I found him not.*

[SONGS OF SOLOMON]

II

LISTEN for your footsteps
Upon the long stair way
And somewhere a woman's voice singing
La Chanson Triste,
Till my soul growing winged
Upon the music's meaning
Throbs into flight
Among clouds — of tears!

III



YOU to whom I stretched forth my arms
Radiantly — as a child at last finding himself
In fairyland — awake!

O you into whom I sinking my glance
Have become exalted! refreshed!
As a thirst-dying traveller
Stopped finally before his pool of dreams.
Tell me how should I with outstretched arms,
Vulnerable eyes,
With nerves suddenly relaxed as a child's
(From nightmare waking into the sweetness
Of his own little room)
How should I so disarmed,
Have heard through the soaring flutes of our caresses
The viol's increasing of pain.
O love elusive, carmine-mouthed,
Gracefully come and gone by me,
When recalling our plans pastoral, tender,
For eternity and lilacs,
I smile beyond resentment or bitterness,
Amazed at the proximity

Of tragic and ridiculous things.
Then wondering if upon some battalioned dawn
Of exceeding judgment
Shall I know or cease caring —
For this reason of my forsakedness by you!
By you! to whom I stretched forth my arms.

.

IV
DISTRUST

I

I WISHING to be free
Of this waspish presence hovering beside me,
Dislocating the verdant pastoral air
Of my classic musing.
I wishing to be free
Of this long-sought rag,
Now binding my curious eyes
With such horneted suspicions,
As to swell them into blindness
Stronger than reality.
O what progress blazed from days storm-strewn
By drifts of midnight weeping?
Nor what harbor achieved from rocking
Upon rivers night-locked by incredible despair?
So I desiring freedom from this passion
For my mistake!

V
DISTRUST

II

[[ATTEND the blistering hiss of evil prophecies
Robbing me of capable pretence,
Prophecies dragging above my surface serpent-
headed figures,

These representing my instinctive distrust of you
And undulating about me,
In dissolute coiling gardens of derision.

And my good angel!

She, measuring the depth of your fang in my soul,
And weeping down upon those swollen abrasions
Circling my already septic heart.

Ah, could her electric tears

Stir my despondent lethargies into vibrations,

Into pulsations, becoming gradually so monumental

That finally I should cast off your lying beauties

From across my being.

For now your ambiguous contours

Cover me,

And, all of life arriving in me — through you —

Writes its message across my brain
Left-handed,
Its message so monstrous
As those reflections in mirrors
That are intentionally absurd.

VI

1918

THESE times sorrowful
Spattering into my eyes fountainal tears
From others —

Those others who die of parting while fearing childishly
They shall not meet again.

These times filled with the sound

Of doors wistfully closing,

And of proud footsteps echoing away towards decimation
perhaps;

Yet behind them leaving a soul fractured certainly

From collision with double tombs.

Yet during these officially tragic times

Believing I see your face among the crowd,

Effervesces suddenly my heart with aroma

Of spring bouquets.

And I dizzy with fragrance

Desire those enchanting moments

Edging surrender to you, O stranger,

So vicious with that whimsicality

Of the insatiate;

And fascinating
Because you will not cease to care
For that inviolate delusion — Love.
Thus, even through the sable blur of these times
Officially tragic,
I catching up a sunbeam to nurse at my heart,
And it growing perhaps
Into a world
Of joy.

VII

I BROODING long in the desolate doorway
Of shadowy hopes,
Afraid of turning backward
Into the Gothic chill of Truth.
So I gazing frantically forward
And nourishing my eye upon irrelevant flushings
Of mirage.
Hoping some day
A cure from loving you,
You provoking in me forever more love,
Love perhaps so inexhaustible since born
Out of those blasted recesses,
Where you have dealt me pain.
Ah the love, the double love we give to those
Who have wounded us — horribly!
For such love, including the passion of hatred
Is imperishable.

VIII
WAITING IN DOUBT

MY heart through the moments expanding
toward a sound
And contracting from the noise of its silence,
And so painfully that rest shudders
Further! further! away from me.
Initiative sprawling splay-footed
Against my hooded slacking —
Memory, imagination, senile, toothless,
Unable to masticate
Either hope or despair.
While vitality from its elbow gazing
Through the unsealing gloom of inhibited melancholies,
Ah, such vitality possessing no prayers, no tears,
Nor blasphemous laughters
For relieving ropes.
Since to-night I am a fountain
Falling upon the sand,
A spectre abandoned to be buried by Chaos,
To be epitaphed in rain!

IX

I LONGING for you as the brook longs
To kiss those reflections it carries
Forever. . . .

I dwelling upon you as girls muse
Over the dimity sills
Of their delicate perceptions. . . .
And just as nuns lashing their litanies into fervor
Before a response of stone,
So I flagellating my hopes
Before the plastic feet
Of your meaning for me. . . .
I loving your silence
With a passion never lavished
Across another's eloquence. . .
I embracing your turning aside
More keenly than any greeting of others. . . .
O for me more magically ensnaring
Is your chaste withdrawal
Than during the surrender
Of all else.

X

JEALOUSY

I TOSS
Over the protruding edges
Of a thousand imaginary points,
Brooding
Upon our slightly separate hours
In sick eloquence.
Since like mist above the sea
Longs to be drained!
Annihilated!
In the dismissal of submergence —
Just so I —
Spreading above your infinite depth
The blur of my melancholies,
Long, for my pain's extinction
Within the mortal collusion
Of our veins.

XI

I N your pallor
Is the remembered desolation
Of snows vastly falling,
And the erect amaze of one
Suddenly confronted with beauty. . . .
Beneath your pallor
There is chased
The sentence confirming my dreams,
There is affixed
The rim emphasizing my depth,
There is made a foothold chaotic
For my star throwing. . . .
Since in your pallor
Is the moment of my complete awakening,
And of my gleam toward the garden
Ahead of the Sun.

XII

I PROFOUNDLY thinking of you,
Of your beauties —
And of their meaning for me
(Those oblique breathless qualities
Of yours)
And of their rank towards my imagination.
So introspectively finding
That I am yours indeed,
And more poignantly than life
Itself is mine!
Since your being
Is the bone structure
Of no less than my soul.

XIII

YOU lead me
By the braided uncoiling strings
Of my uttermost reach —

I looking backwards
At those arcaded forests,
Rose-thick vistas
Of my primal before-dreams.
I gazing backward into those clear wells
And down upon those droning grasses
That mirrored! hummed!
With my first imaginations.
As from my dimity moon-gazing,
As from the hungry weariness
Of my puissant discontent,
You leading me forward —
On where the shelving sides
Commence now to exhibit
The marauding flights
Of your escapading fancy,
All in Gothic scale
All in mummer's finery!
On — where the boom of blasphemy

Toppling over the shrill chant
Of every admonition
Turns the sun unnaked
That it may burn more
Through obscurity.
Then still onward — until the air is livid enough
To support the darting of your scarlet breath
Into mine —
Ah then your whiteness
Compassing me like a claw
And your whispers twisting! shaking me!
As the tapers of hell must slant and shiver
At a wind from the blown door
Of heaven!
Until your passion from my last string
Whipping melody,
Pierces through all I was,
That what I am, hissing out
In strange joy
May answer back to your whispers,
Leaping over incomparable abyss
To gash itself finally against a new softness,
Aye, passing through transcendental affinity
Into that blonde aftermath —
Of Apex.

XIV

NARCISSUS

IN your breath snow flights
And the dancing of perfumed women
Through winter ball rooms. . . .
In your breath blue dawns
Above ice-blocked cities,
And exquisite lingerings
Against a beloved's pillow. . . .
In your breath the tang
Of freezing lobbies
Filled with the finale of orchestration,
And with evacuating swish
Of sky-colored silks. . . .
For in your breath the pallor
Of amorous women —
The wistfulness of children
Against a florist's window —
And the pathos of charity bells
Ringing through the rain. . . .
O surely in your breath there is memory,
Memory more poignant
Than in any other flower
I know.

XV

HELIO-TROPE, you so reminding me
Of delicate footprints,
Observed in anguish by one
Whose tryst
Has forever fled —
And somehow in you that nostalgia
Of precious things lavendered away
Beneath those wistful distinguished resignations —
Of immortal hope.

XVI

IRIS

WHITE Iris, how pure, how lovely,
Like a virgin
In her starched lawn fête dress. . . .

Iris, pallid blue, gold veined,
And as if coloured from dawn chills,
Or from the yellow-fingered touching
Of curious starlight. . . .

Purple Iris,
Streaked with amethystine memories of the night,
Health-glossed and firm as are those ripe wings
Of oriental butterflies. . . .

So in my garden
Undulating ranks of Iris,
Slimly holding their broad flat blooms
(Like tripods of incense)
Aloft — towards the moist spearing
Of morning sunlight.

XVII

YOU showing me what dreams are
To live with — and waken from —
Yet such ecstasies thieving unbearably
Tolerance for the hours succeeding them.
And so this malice of unblinking days,
Nerve-ridden nights,
And all caught from a few exalté moments.
Again this comradeship with world tears,
It born perhaps from too shrill mutual laughter.
So I, apparently dead from the weight
Of those imaginative costumes
My soul thrust over my flesh
To worship you in —
And you austere incommunicably sad;
From potentially knowing
How the maze and tissue of premeditated falsehood,
Has branded your eyes with hostile weariness,
Drawn your lips into expressing aloofness
Demoniacally opposed to peace.
You poor love, so lost, frozen into yourself
With that passionate force

Of wilful ignorance.
And I, strayed beyond return
Into elementary sadness,
And from having once dreamed of depending
Upon your ephemeral beauty.

XVIII

AND so we, drifting apart,
Yoked still, and rudely, by passion;
Yet already each cannily constructing
Little shelters for when, ah for when
Our wills shall tweak into silence eternal
This song throat of mutual pleasure.
So I quickly exhibiting my brain before you
Through a row of stunts,
(Just like some acrobat fanning with lesser endeavor
Breathlessness for the great feat)
And you, unconsciously goading my calisthenics
With abstracted eye, perfunctory caress —
These crying out to me and within me.
Becoming admonition shrieking:
Cease loving beside your love,
Or else an eternally wailing wash
Of uncertain regrets, longing memories.
So I, making haste to be out of love
And while still with you —
Yet is this bewildering numbing weight — Peace?

The Peace for energy I was seeking;
Ah, perhaps this pressure the coffin lid of a death,
And mine, and achieved quite long ago —
In fearing this would come.

XIX
LOVE'S LEXICON

A FEW voluptuous evenings — tidally rapturous,
Glittering momentarily upon shores
Long sought —
Then stray islands of pleasure
Chaffed by winds smouldering,
And surrounded by gaps continually widening,
Of aridities interminable —
A few aeons of age
Compressed into clouding moments of pitching ill-ease,
Till finally explosion — spluttering from gnashed teeth,
And tapering into those spar-strewn swells of self-pity,
Ah, then the involuntary smile
Or purgative mirror,
Already voluble, whimsical upon this subject
Of the “grande passion,”
And more lately the quiet laugh
During solitary evening walks.

XX

EARTH respiring, exhaling the moistures of
 twilight
 Through odorous pores
 (To the piping whirl of innumerable bird presence)
 Earth shooting through infinite veins
 Colour, vitality, into reeds, weeds, flowers,
 And these illuminating now
 With pallor-sheens of light dying —
 Ah, and across my soul streaming
 A suspension of brightness,
 Through which I floating
 Become aware — passionately —
 Of remembering nothing.

XXI
FIN DE SIÈCLE

YOUR high laugh casually proclaiming the
departure
Of a king from kings. . . .

Your thin lips stencilled by the wings
Of furious spiritual caresses. . . .
And your élite tapering limbs,
They, unconsciously parading a grace
Assembled from the hauteur of centuries. . . .
Ah that you should lack depth
In which to become inflamed
By those curious reflections you are casting
Into my thought —
Ah, that you should possess no fancy
To shade wanly with elusive smiles
A mouth pensive alluring
Through contrasting moods —
Thus bewildering, confounding
With tenderness and passion
The pursuit of you. . . .
And, neither have you that fictitious force

Of sublime nervousness,
Lending you the costumes of beast, clown,
And elegant arbiter
During rarefied contests. . . .
Yet you possess the haunting beauty my past wore
Upon innumerable occasion,
Yet you arrest me with gestures
That have passed through generations
Of my familiar gaze;
Indeed, I believe you to be the exact figure
Of my romantic memories —
Without their soul.

XXII

LISTENING to music, I feel that I am about to
recall
What it is I have sought
Through generations —
Among melodies I groping my way again
Through possibilities infinitely yearning
To be awarded their dreams —
Since during music I detect that genial smile of youth
Flung back enticing over its irradiant shoulder,
And elapsing into a demure pomp of coquetry
Preceding — admission to discover.
Then finally flaring into stretches,
Into expanses sparkling with dual flight —
Mystic flight, aiming towards shrines of Supreme Love
Where certainly is donated The Sacrament of Death.
Ah, then! this cry of souls momentarily dividing —
I hear it in music!
And am racked with a whisper urging me to recall
Who it is I have lost
Through generations.

XXIII
BROKEN-HEARTED LIFE

FOR the night weighing upon me heavily,
Rending into my dreams with staccato sighs
And suffocating me up out of my slumber.

So consciousness casting over me a mantle of swords —
(The billion remembrance of our peculiar unity)
So consciousness chilling me with moisture from tears
That were fountained back once,
That were drowning to my spirit during our parting.
So I, crippled from a pressure of darkness,
So I, blistered by the flambeaux of memories,
Become restless, confused, embarrassed
For a manner in which to endure
The succeeding hours —
Become agitated, obsessed, demented from needing a
force
More mighty than my despairing thought,
To bend my attention
Unto the Present.

XXIV

T RAGIC endings —

Ah, possibly the intellect transcending them,

Only for that intuitive expectancy

Nourished into custom

Through days innumerably strung upon one another

As the links of chains!

So no will stroke,

With imperious, pathetic gesture of dismissal,

Immediately cleaving instinct from habit;

Nor consequently am I yet relieved

From fancying your step, at its usual hour —

Upon the stairs!

XXV
NOCTURNE

VIOLINS, violins,
Sounding wan, pregnant of invisible things
As dawn. . . .

Sounding wistful as pallors adolescent

Yearning over marsh-still mirrors

For double reflections. . . .

And again recalling the wisteriad death-pall

So marking in sculptural pathos

Slim outlines. . . .

Or suggesting resurrecting wings

Beating, glittering

Around that stare enchanted

Of a final peace. . . .

Or again reflecting the eternal slenderness of man

Throughout vast night-ponds of destiny wading

With blind-folded eyes. . . .

Ah, violins, violins,

Sounding wan, pregnant of invisible things

As dawn.

XXVI

WALKING ALONG THE BEACH

A GRAIL-LIKE radiance
Blooming at the end of long sand stretch,
Over me a slate-fleeced canopy
Reflecting beside me in the sombre blurring roar of sea;
Beneath my feet a soft insistent humming
Between sand and surf —
And so memory with all its tragic consciousness
Of self-betrayal
Becoming submerged into some limbo of suspended
dreams,
While my inmost soul looking outward —
As in childhood or at death —
Ah, how infinitely refreshing.

XXVII
WRITTEN TO CLAUDE DEBUSSY'S
"MANDOLINE"



YOUR song like the waxen death masks of Pierrot
Illuminating suddenly from mist. . . .
Your song as the echoing away of resigned
farewells

Down a pathway of close-fallen petals. . . .
Your song as the nostalgic wandering of virgins
Among mazes of lilies at dusk. . . .
And again your song like gardens flaring en fête
Around those lunar stained motions of love-seekers. . . .
Ah, your notes drifting into my soul
As the half-heard wash of tidal dreams
Mysteriously departing. . . .
And your song covering me in patches of moonlight,
Moonlight ribbons gesticulating in the wind

As the glimmering wave of Pierrot's solitary arms. . . .
And from behind your sophisticated grimace,
What flute-like ardors exhaling
Into shapes ritually graceful,
Into forms classically attired,
Above nakedness — primeval.

XXVIII

FOR one instant fog banks lifting
Over fields of iris —
Their perfume streaming
Into sudden shafts of sun. . . .
And again mists shrouding —
Through which the furtive mystic breath
Of expanding bloom. . . .
While I, pensive in pursuing
Those reflections of my thought
Along this mood of things;
While I, attending the pattering of shadows,
They furling me around
As attenuate streamers of smoke,
(Pennants classifying to-morrow)
While I, listening to those elliptic harmonies of memory
Flashing me through as wan lightning
Over landscape's chasm-scarred. . . .
Then I, at length perceiving Promise! Frustration!
Poised ever hand in hand
With heads bowed —
Sensible of each other
Yet strangers forever in each other's sight.

XXIX

SUNSET

COLUMNS of golden smoke
Floating against aquamarine —
Ribbed mantles of purple — rose —
Stretching across sapphire musk —
Fissures — slate coloured —
Expanding into white and widening
Among greens — reds —
Then — wind-pulled dust-gray snow-fields
Turning black.

XXX

SUNSET INTO TWILIGHT

A CROSS the silent breakwater floating
Those vast images of sunset —
Couches roseate — canopied in gold —
Tapering into necklaces — emerald — amethyst —
Sundering into single stains of glow —
Like a jewel's shining
Through sable wine.

XXXI



PPLES

Lacquered in Chinese green, shining!

Like a wind-blown cheek —

Apples

Savoring in their juice the fragrance

Of entire orchards.

They tasting of stiff rose-colored petals

Varnished in moon-dew,

Iridescent of the sun.

They tasting of autumnal earth,

Earth exhaling through vaporous frost the aroma

Of Harvest and Death!

Apples

Green-veined snow-balls appeasing

Both hunger and thirst!

Apples

Savoring in their juice the fragrance

Of entire orchards.

XXXII

I DREAMED of flowers hedge-high
With mauve rose pale cups,
Cups exhaling for me
The aroma of gardens lichened from sunlight,
Misted from daybreak
Where immortals, love-pale attenuate immortals
Made postures indescribable
With their marble limbs. . . .

I dreamed of a dome
Through blossoming trellis,
Shimmering, transcendental this dome
And throwing sunbeam druggets aloft
Upon the blue smear of the sky. . . .

And I dreamed of a room
Circular, unceilinged,
From whence no escape
But into which wide, wide admission. . . .

And a voice thunderous
Threw these pictures for me
Into a frieze,
Labelling them
Passion!
Ecstasy!
Love!

XXXIII

VISION

THIS morning my spirit stands
Brightly pallidly beside me as dawn,
The dawn

Hardly yet separate from moonlight.
Clad in the crystal gossamer
Of all my dreams, tears, this spirit stands
Close, close beside me,
Esoterically the portrait
Of my melancholy conclusions.
For this morning my body is lifted out of pain
By too much suffering perhaps —
This morning my body feels asleep;
Touching my hand, it seems a stranger's;
Ah only from flesh so numb as mine
Could the spirit gleam out
Recalling! Propheying!
With such sea-deep mountainous eyes.
For this morning the traffic of circumstance
Is growing further muffled, while I
Attending to the rhythms of immortal words

Among singing shadows,
Among ultimate downpouring lights,
I wander finally upon a place where there is no more
self
To know or to guard —
Only the shelter
Of vast enthusiasm.

XXXIV

VISION

THIS morning is something singing near me,
about me
Through mist-vaulted trees, in spite of many
waterfalls

I hear it singing, a shrill fair voice.
And before its sky-tone all tarnished memories submerge,
All jetsam nightmare of blasphemous curiosities are
sucked away
Upon a rust current of annihilation.
For this voice is like a flute I heard once
From the elbow of childhood,
Like the wreathing allure of a flute dream-singing
To me across dew-rigid meadows,
For me above rearing magical nights.
And now its pre-subliminal presence approaching me
Is like the shuddering of wingèd descent
Over grails irradiant;
And now piercing me like some archangel's blade
Its glance stiffens my lashes into a staring obeisance

Until what I feel! Until what I feel!
Surpasses the white burning of a million lamps
Across fields of lilies —
Ah, Fate . . . is it possible
I am — at last — with my soul?

XXXV

ADOLESCENCE —
The most exquisite phase
Reminiscent of a slender blanchèd blur
Leaning against trees that are dim as shadows,
And yearning skyward awake
Over its serpentine reflections
In brooks during dawn. . . .

Adolescence

Reminiscent of furled garments
Blowing back against the rush
Of imperious limbs —
And again reminiscent of bacchanal-swerving,
Bending, flashing, abruptly away
From the thieving of innumerable garlands. . . .

Adolescence

Tanned with the glittering stain of sunlight,
Stained with those crimson juices of sun-ripened berries,
Eager, restless, confused!
Dazzling as sea-foam and attenuate naturally
From the pensive lure of brooding dreams —
I salute, I exalt your beauty,
O Adolescence —
The most exquisite phase.

RHYMES

I
AUTUMNAL

T O-NIGHT the inland sea hurls through the air
Her foam, the trees twist silver-limbed and
bare!

A new strength mutters in the wind, while I —
I feel the nails of Time among my hair!

II
THE bitter frightfulness of love profane
That passing leaves a strangely blanchèd stain,
A leprosy of spirit that subdues
All light — all life — into the hue of rain.

III
AND of those idols, friend, we hide away
In veils lest as we kneel to them and pray
Some cyclop force disseminate — while we
Should find ourselves a better thing than they.

IV

If only those bright impulses which come
Beating us with their wings a single day
Would only pause past our inspection — stay;
But like all winged things they fly away.

V

AH, how we change the gold that we attain
To nickel through the constancy of use,
Until our eyes grow vague, our dancing loose,
Our soul a grave charged with undying pain!

VI

Go seek the tangled rhythms of decay,
Or forge the gates of knowledge while you may,
Or listen to the credulous who pray,
Since for each one there is an “only way.”

VII
ECLIPSE

LAST night the Moon turned over in the sky
Lighting the fêtes of Heaven for a while,
And all the world sank to a pallid sigh
Seeming too wholly weary e'en to die.

VIII
SLEEP, I am ready, come for me and take
Away the pain of hours spent awake;
Sleep, I am ready, O come fill the jar
With sparkling dreams poured from my nearest star.

IX
INTO the Sea of Hope I flung my bait,
A leaping candor with a love of fate,
And fished for the reality of dreams
While courage trembled and the day grew late.

X
THE colored leaves of autumn through a mist
Are like spent hopes seen through my mem'ry's veil,
Halting this strange inviolable tryst
I hold with sadness, to recount their tale.

XI

THE flame of labour, friend, ah tend to it,
It is the latest flame that keepeth lit,
The single warmth no dissolution chills,
The only gold no hand may counterfeit.

XII

O TELL me, Passion Comrade, what alloy
Of baseness breeds in giving way to joy,
That I from feasting from where my need was lain
Should rise with such immeasurable pain.

XIII

THERE is a want of love, the need of grief,
The want of work and food and sleep — a sheaf —
Of stark necessities, and more —
There is a constant, changing need — Belief.

XIV

O WHAT soul can perceive its grief at first,
Trapped, trodden, flattened out against its woe,
Till Time, along the road that we have curst
Lights in perspective — ruins we did not know.

XV

WHAT of the garden where my feast was set,
What of the touch my soul shall not forget
Since soul was born of it — Ah tell me why
The “making of us” makes us long to die.

XVI

THE soul has been too torn, twixt its desires,
The body too much scorched between its fires
Of passion! sacrifice! so then the blur
Of lethargy, and promise vast expires.

XVII
TO WALT WHITMAN

MOST cleanly spirit of the earth who knew
Enough to know your soul was health's
demand —

We cowards sick a-bed exchange through you
Suppressions, for control of what is true.

XVIII
POISONED SPRINGS

THE falseness of uncandid life which breeds
Impotent chagrin and that scattered brain
Whose thoughts too long repressed cannot
maintain

Their meaning, but succumb like dust to rain.

XIX

AND it is all significant, the way
We learn to laugh, or rise from tears, or pray.
Most clearly have I felt this when the stars
Drew up my eyes to measure their display.

XX

YOUTH looks into his mirror and exclaims,
“I love the world with all her joys and pains.
Her obstacles are stimulating rings
Through which I leap towards vast forbidden things.”
Age gazes from his window on the street
With eyes most deeply penetrant yet sweet,
Murmuring, “How could I have ever dreamed
That ‘this’ could cause my subtle pulse — a beat!”

XXI

As one who lonely, treading lonesome roads,
Turns at the sound of footsteps close behind,
To wait with hands outstretched in welcoming
Towards that which passes silent, undefined!
Towards that which passing secretly away
Must leave the soul more pregnant with dismay.

XXII

A BEING of beauty whose strange dreams are mad —
They filled with goblins of excess so rare
He wakes fatigued — remote — half-conscious — sad,
Afflicted by degrees to sick despair,
Evasive then as malenchanted troll;
His pallor stained, his mood arrested stare
Seem dimly to repine like Lucifer's
The grey-winged flight of a departed soul.

XXIII
LOST INNOCENCE

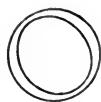
A S one who gazing long upon some pool
Where crescent lilies rock a sunken moon,
Longs! burns! to merge his fever with their
cool;

Aches! yearns! to mate their sleeping with his swoon —
So I within a moment's mystery
Seeing all memories circled in a sigh,
My ardor's wreathing fallen chastity —
Longed that I might submerge in them — and die.

XXIV
OUR DYING

SOMEWHERE a trumpet blew
Across horizons of immortal dawn,
Somewhere a swallow flew
Between clouds storming, and the red-gold morn,
Somewhere a whisper swept
The surface of eternal sea,
Recalling to reunion
You and me.

XXV



— HOW appealing you were
Lying there,
Your eyes a bit dishevelled
And your hair
All tumbled with sublime
Fantastic grace
About your yearning innocent
Young face.

XXVI

ALLIED in some inexorable bond
Of passion and reproach, we two allied
Through knotted hours from which joy has
sighed
Away her presence, Ah, can love have died
From pleasure, and is this inflamed regret
The passion yoking our aloneness yet?

XXVII

TO G.

AS some vast sea is strewn
With wrecked spars
After the horrid tussle of the gale —
So in your eyes the ruin
Of many stars
Is written like some evil-ending tale.

XXVIII

I N through the valley
Dawn's helmet gleamed,
And you, you came behind
Or so it seemed,
And cut away with vaulting strokes
My tangled prison hair,
Hurling all sadness dancing,
Singing, on the air;
Holding your hands out towards me
Or so it seemed,
In fondest, gayest promise, Beloved —
I only dreamed.

XXIX

YOU crept into my arms sighing,
Sighing like the wounded
Who dream of a beloved in dying,
So in my arms lay you sighing.
Delicate, fantastic, wan as the dawn-frost
Even in your paradise, poor love so lost!

XXX

THE pale blue moon
Within the northern sky —
Those tragedies, those tragedies
Of which we do not die —
Those yearnings half aspired
That extinguish in a sigh —
These and these
Clamp my soul in a cry.

XXXI
THE DEAD POET

HE sleeps at last,
An alabaster tale
Of youth's inconsequence,
Of beauty's sale
To death and decadence.
He rests at length,
A rigid ivory whim
The gods blew earthward
On a cloud's soft limb
To pleasure men.
Men who awoke
Hearing him singing there
Of all that is most subliminal,
Most fair;
Of Love's authority,
Of parting's grief,
Of soul's eternity
And love's belief.
Hearing him
Yet they gave him singing back

Unto himself, unto his pregnant heart,
Until his spirit guessed
And fell apart
Of songs too sweet to live
And be repressed.
So now he sleeps at last,
Gauging futility
Of songs sung or unsung,
Upon lost searching ships.
So now he rests at length,
Tasting infinity,
A smile — upon his young
Unconscious lips.

XXXII

TO EDGAR ALLAN POE



VER the dark winged sadness of your face,
Across the haunted splendor of your brow,
Many a god-thought captured the embrace
Of fancies, that shall be, have been, are now;
There in your tragic slanted elfin soul —
Gloom-lightened with the arabesques of storm,
There surely once each sorrow did enroll
Its melancholy tale upon your scroll.
Since all unanswered prayers, all dim regrets
Make pillars through the shadow of your lines
For sternly vaulted sadness which repines
The everlasting sorrow it defines —
O pallid sculptor of the letheal core
Your nightliness burns light, for evermore!

XXXIII

“WHY”

WHY some down-flying bird
Shakes a slumbering rose,
Why a poet's muse — leads on or goes —

God knows!

Why love conjuring gleams
Should alight on your sill,
Singing to you — Fulfill, Fulfill,
Till you rise, cry out, but the air is still,
Why birth is launched among shrieks and cries,
Why life is spun from the thread of sighs,
Until death sweeps up on his flight of crows,
God knows!

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